

[Abran Miller]

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Carrizozo, N. Mex. [Interview?]

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Abran Miller.

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I was born in February, 1863 (I do not know the date) at Manzano, New Mexico. I have lived in Lincoln County, New Mexico, continuously for sixty-four years.

My father, Holan Miller, was born in Canada. I do not know where nor in what year. My mother, Manuelite Herrera Carrillo, was born in Manzano, New Mexico, but I do not know what year she was born.

My father and mother married in Manzano, New Mexico, in 1869. There were five children, three boys and two girls. Debbie, Abran, [Willie?], Eliza and Adolpho Miller.

My father was a blacksmith by trade and where-ever we lived he had a shop of his own. We lived in Manzano New Mexico, for about four years.

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In the fall of 1863 we moved to Springer, New Mexico, where we lived for seven years. Father put up a blacksmith shop and took two hundred head of cattle to run on shares and he built up the herd until he had about one hundred head of his own. We left Springer in 1870, in two covered wagons, drawn by six oxen to each wagon. We took our cattle, about one hundred head with us. We traveled most of the time at night on account of being afraid of the Indians. The only cow boy that I remember helping us, was my mother's brother, my uncle, Pat Carillo. I used to ride behind him. He would strap me to his waist to keep me from falling off. The men in the crowd carried six shooters in their belts and Winchester rifles on their saddles. We had no trouble [???] the trip to Fort Sumner in about two weeks.

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We lived in Fort Sumner New Mexico until 1874. Father had a blacksmith shop there too. His herd of cattle increased to about two hundred and seventy five head. In the early spring of 1874 he decided to move to Fort Stanton, New Mexico.

We loaded up in the two covered wagons, drawn by six oxen to a wagon, and started for Fort Stanton, which was a military post at that time.

We crossed the Pecos River at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, and had no trouble crossing the cattle. We grazed the cattle along and took our time and made the trip for Fort Stanton in about two weeks. We lived there for about three years. My brother, Adolpho, was born there and lived only a short time. He died and was buried there at Fort Stanton. My father was blacksmith for the fort.

My father rented a small piece of land from A. N. Blazer, who owned and ran the Blazer Mill, which was situated on the [Mescalero?] Indian Reservation. I do not remember just when we moved to this place on the Indian Reservation. The place had a two roomed log house on it, where we lived. My father still had his cattle and he had them on Fernando Herrera's place on the [?].

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Father set up a blacksmith shop, planted a garden and about twenty acres in corn. He made a good crop and when he gathered it in the fall he sent word for me to come home. I had been staying with my uncle, Pat Carrillo, who lived not very far away on the Reservation. When I got home my father said; "Son, here is my crop and my blacksmith shop, you can sell them. Take care of your mother, I am going away and you will not see me anymore." He left that day on horseback. He went by Dowlin's Mill and sold his cattle to Paul and Will Dowlin, took the money and left the country.

Soon after my father went away I went to work for the Murphy 3 Dolan Company, punching cows. I was about seventeen years old. The head quarter ranch house was on the Carrizozo Flats, at what is now the Bar W ranch.

After my father left my mother moved to the Solado flats, about one mile west of where the town of Capitan now stands.

When my father had been gone for about four years I got a letter from him one day. He was over on the Rio Grande river, at a place called [Caan?] Colorado, about eighteen miles south of Belen, New Mexico. He wanted me to come over there to see him, so I saddled up my black pony and started. I took me two days to make the trip. When I arrived, I found my father in his blacksmith shop. he said; "Hello son, I am glad you came. I want you to have a black stallion I have here, and you can also have this blacksmith shop. I am leaving this time and you will never see me again." He turned and started walking toward the river. I never did see or hear of him from that day to this, nor ever found any body else that ever saw him after that day. My father was always a very queer man and brooded a lot.

I was very small for my age and when I first went to work for the Murphy, Dolan Company. I got my clothes and board and Mr. Murphy gave forty dollars to my mother, each month. I soon made them a good cow hand and then I got sixty dollars a month.

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They sent me with a bunch of cattle to Elk Canyon, in the [?] Indian Reservation. These cattle were to be butchered for the Indians as they needed them. A fellow by the name of Lucio Montoya and I were left to watch the cattle and keep the Indians from stealing them. One morning we got up and it was Lucio's time to go and get the horses. We kept a small black mule in the corral 4 to ride after the [saddle?] horses. While Lucio was saddling up the mule I was looking around to see if I could see anything of the horses.

All at once I saw an awful dust rising and I told Lucio to hurry up as I feared some one was rounding up either the cattle or the saddle horses.

He rode off in a run. I waited for some time and he did not return. I had just about decided that he had been killed, and I went back to the cabin. I was standing in the door of the cabin when about thirty men rode up to the door. The leader was a nice looking young fellow. He said "Hello kid, do you have anything to eat?"

I said, "Yes, there is coffee, beans, flour and some canned goods, you are welcome to it, but you will have to cook it yourselves. I have to go and get my horses and see what has become of Lucio."

The leader of this gang was "Billy the Kid." I did not know it at the time as this was just the beginning of the trouble leading up to the "Lincoln County War". This war was between two cattle factions. Murphy and Dolan on one said and McSween and [?] on the other.

Billy the Kid saw I was just a kid and was scared and he said; "Kid don't be afraid for not a man in the crowd will hurt you nor bother anything around here while your are in charge of it." They all got down from their horses and came in. I helped them make some coffee. While we were waiting for the coffee to boil Billy the Kid asked me all about myself, how old I was, where I live, etc. After they had eaten they all rode off toward the head of Elk Canyon.

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I started out a-foot to find the horses and soon found 5 them. The mule that Lucio had started after the horses on was with them but I could not find Lucio. I soon saw that a horse of Lucio's was gone and I just decided that he had gotten frightened and left.

I found out later that this gang of men were with the [McSween?] and Tunstall faction but they never bothered me at all.

While my mother was living on the Salado, Billy the Kid came to our house for something to eat. This was after the time he had been to the camp at Elk's Canyon. He recognized me at once and I did him. My mother did not want to feed him because he was no on Murphy's side at that time. I told her how nice he had been to me that time at Elk's Canyon, so she gave him something to eat and let him stay all night. I got up early the next morning and went out to milk the cow. While I was milking the dogs began to bark. I saw several men riding horseback, coming towards the house. I did not have time to warn Billy that someone was coming but he and mother saw them. Mother had a big home-made packing box she used for a trunk and it had a pad lock on it. She hid Billy in this box before the men reached the house. (This was after [?] had been killed. [?] was the clerk at the Mесаclero Indian Agency, and Billy had been indited for this killing, and was on the dodge.)

When I reached the house I found that the men were Sheriff Peppin and [Florencio?] Chaves, his deputy, and two other men. (I have forgotten their names.) They were looking for Billy. They searched the house but did not find him. Peppin [?] out in the yard and asked who the black horse with the saddle on belonged to. I told him it was my horse. He wanted to know why I kept a horse saddled and staked out. I told him I kept the horse to go round up the other horses. He did not believe me. I know, for he said to one of his 6 men that Billy the Kid should be around there somewhere. When he did not find Billy they rode away. The Kid stayed in our house all that day and when it got dark Mother asked me to let Billy have my black horse and saddle, as she tho'ught that he would return them to me. I did, and sure enough, in about ten days I got up one morning and found my horse,

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with the saddle on, in the corral. I never did know who brought him back. I was surely glad, for I tho'ught an awful lot of this horse and I was so afraid that Billy would not get him back to me. I had traded with the Apache Indians for this horse. I had given about ten dollars worth of red flannel, beads and powder for him.

When Billy the Kid and his gang had killed [Bernstein?], a clerk at the Indian Agency, Mr. L. O. Murphy, (of the Murphy, Dolan Company), sent me to Santa Fe, New Mexico, with the message to the governor. I rode this same black horse. I had to go first to Fort Stanton to see the commanding officer. I got there about three o'clock in the morning. The guard stopped me but when I told him what I wanted to see the commanding officer about, he took me to the officer's house. This officer gave me another message and a fresh horse and I started for Santa Fe. I rode to Pinco [?], on the north side of the [Gallinao?] Mountains, that night. I knew a fellow there, by the name of Mario Payne, and he let me have a fresh horse, and I made it on to Santa Fe on the third day.

When I went in to see Governor Axtall, and deliver my messages to him he was mad because they had sent such a kid. He asked me why Pat Carillo had not sent his own son, as he was larger and older than I was. He also told me to tell Mr. Murphy to give me three hundred dollars for that trip, and if Mr. Murphy didn't do it, he would. I got my three hundred dollars from Mr. Murphy all right.

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That is the only part that I took in the Lincoln County War, altho'ugh I was working for the Murphy, Dolan Company all during the war. I stayed at the head quarters ranch on the Carrizozo Flats most of the time.

I saved up about six hundred dollars while I was working for the Murphy, Dolan Company, and on February 12, 1881, I married Juanita Romero, the daughter of Juan Romero, Of Lincoln, New Mexico. There was no priest in Lincoln at that time and I had to send to Manzano, New Mexico, to get a priest to marry us.

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Father Louis [Boresolver?] came over from Manzano and married us and I paid him twenty-five dollars to make the trip. We went to housekeeping in Lincoln and I still worked for Murphy and Dolan. My wife and I had five children, three girls and two boys. They were all born at Lincoln, New Mexico. Andres, [?], Susanna, Trinidad and [?]. All of our children are dead except Andres, the oldest one. He is married and lives in Roswell, New Mexico. My wife and I have been separated for a number of years. She lives with Andres, in Roswell.

I live here in Carrizozo, New Mexico, and would not live any where else. My little one room shack is on the old head quarters ranch place where I used to cut out all the strays from the heard.

Narrator: Abran Miller, Carrizozo, New Mexico, Aged [75?] years.

CORRECTIONS ON THE ABRAN MILLER- PIONEER STORY

Page 1, paragraph 4.

"Father and Mother lived in Manzano New Mexico, for about four years."

"I was about six months old when we moved to Springer, New Mexico."